

Voters give go-ahead to land transfer tax

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 58, No. 45

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C. Thursday, November 9, 1989

30 CENTS

Briefs

Recycling day set Saturday

The Albemarle Environmental Association is organizing a mini-recycling center on Nov. 11 at Ward's Shopping Center, Hwy. 17 opposite Hardee's in Hertford.

Cash will be paid to anyone who brings items to be recycled between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Materials that will be accepted for payment include glass, all colors; hard plastic, such as milk jugs, soda bottles and detergent or oil containers; metals, including aluminum cans or foil, brass and copper; car batteries and radiators. Tin, cardboard, and all kinds of paper will be accepted without payment. Best payment is received if articles are sorted generally by type (plastic, glass, metal, paper).

Area residents are urged to participate in this recycling event. Recent statistics show that if individuals support a recycling movement, more than 50 per cent of materials currently being deposited in the landfill can be recycled. This savings of landfill space translates directly into savings in tax dollars. For more information, call 426-9563.

School system to observe National Week

The Perquimans County school system will be celebrating American Education Week November 12-18, 1989. American Education Week will be 68 years old this year. The goal of American Education Week is to increase public understanding and appreciation of the nation's schools, to encourage parents and interested persons to visit schools and to build civic and community support for education.

"Learning and Liberty: Our Roots, Our Future" is the theme for this year's celebration. There is no question that learning is the keystone of our liberty, and that our roots of democracy are intertwined with education from the one-room schoolhouse in the wilderness to Harvard and Stanford and Cal Tech and MIT and all the other great colleges and universities across our land. American education—learning and liberty—has its roots in the founding of America. The leaders of the American Revolution saw education as a key to preserving liberty, securing unity, promoting good citizenship and developing its resources. They believed education would help maintain the union of states, an untied people and a foundation of democracy.

They were right! But, what about our future? What about our nation's future and that of its schools? As we approach the 21st Century in a rapidly changing, technological, computerized, somewhat uncertain and at times rootless world; this is a perplexing question.

Please support our schools as we continue to strive to meet the challenges of today and prepare our students for the future. This is also a time to think back to those special teachers or school personnel who have made a difference in our lives.

Hertford voters re-elect Beers and Haste

Race is won by very small margin

Hertford voters re-elected incumbents John Beers and Erie Haste to their town council in a very close race Tuesday.

Beers came out on top, taking 27.26 percent of the votes cast. The 26-year council veteran garnered 259 votes, the most tallied for any candidate.

Two-time council member Erie Haste narrowly edged by contender Bill Glover. Haste received 187 votes to Glover's 181.

The Rev. John London placed fourth in the race with 179 votes, only two less than third vote-getter Glover.

Vance Hoover took 13.47 percent of the votes with 128. Jordan Bonner received 16 votes.

Most of the small crowd gathered at the courthouse door when the votes were posted expressed surprise at how close the numbers were for each candidate.

Beers commented on his victory, "I certainly want to express my appreciation and thanks to all those who supported me in this." He also stated that he was very pleased to see two young people concerned enough about the town to seek office.

"I'm very pleased to have come out with one of the seats," Haste said of his close race.

Political newcomer Glover said, "Good race. It was very close." He was pleased with the support shown

him for his first try at town government.

"I'll see them (the voters) in two years," Hoover commented. He expressed his thanks to the voters who came out to support the candidates of their choice.

John London said, "We'll come back," seemingly indicating his intention to seek office in the next election.

Bonner was not present at the poll.

Because each voter was asked to vote for two candidates, it is difficult to analyze exactly what the voters said in this race.

Although both incumbents were re-seated, the votes they received together totaled 446. The challengers collected 504 votes. Does this mean that the voters are satisfied with the status quo, or that they want a change that was not reflected in the election? No exit polls were set up, so it is impossible to answer the question.

Winfall

In an election with no race, Winfall voters put Mayor C.W. "Bill" Bartlett, William Ray Miller and Shirley Yates back in office. Bartlett and Mrs. Yates both received 85 votes, while 66 votes were cast for Miller.

Bartlett will begin serving his second term as mayor in January. Mrs. Yates was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board, and was elected for the first time by voters. Miller is a veteran of the council.



Candidates posted signs outside Hertford's polling places asking for voter support. Incumbents John Beers and Erie Haste were re-seated in a close race.

Land transfer tax referendum passes

The much-touted land transfer tax referendum was given the support of Perquimans voters Tuesday by a 669 to 580 margin.

The county commissioners and school board members endorsed the measure that the county commissioners promise will be used to fund capital outlay projects for the school system.

According to the wording in the referendum, the county commissioners now have the authority to levy up to a 1 percent tax on land transfers. The monies must be used for capital outlay projects.

The facilities needs in the school system have reached critical proportions. Waste water treatment systems must be installed at Central and Perquimans Middle schools over the next two to three years. Failure to construct the systems could result in heavy fines levied against the county.

The middle school has inadequate space for the present enrollment, and state projections show an increase in pupils over the next few years. Construction and/or major renovations are needed at that site.

Central School is overflowing. The schools maintenance department has built a mobile unit to house students at that facility, and still space is limited.

Dr. Mary Jo Martin has requested the services of a structural engineer to determine what the future holds for the vocational building at the high school. If the cost of renovating is too great, other alternatives must be found to deal with the resulting loss of space.

In Hertford Grammar School, two storage closets now house classrooms, and just this week a wall between the former teacher's lounge and a storage area was removed to make room for a computer lab.

County Manager Paul Gregory reviewed land transfers over the past few years. Basing his projections on those transfers, Gregory estimates that approximately \$125,000 per year can be collected through the implementation of the land transfer tax.

Although these monies alone will not be sufficient to fund all the capital needs in the school system, they can be added to state matching grant funds to help ease the ad valorem tax burden on county taxpayers. At a matching grant rate of 3 percent of state money for every \$1 of local funds, the \$125,000 could feasibly turn into \$600,000 per year in available capital outlay monies.

In order to generate \$600,000 in ad valorem taxes, the county would have to add approximately 24 cents per \$100 valuation to the present tax rate. That would add about \$120 in taxes to the owners of property valued at \$50,000 on the county's tax books.

Gregory and Dr. Martin visited several civic groups explaining the land transfer tax and soliciting support for the measure. Gregory was confident that the voters would stand behind the levy.

The tax will be implemented 30 days after the county commissioners approve it. They are expected to move immediately.

Board adjusts water bills

The county commissioners adjusted three water bills and heard a water department report at their Monday morning meeting.

Harry Lee Winslow told the commissioners that muskrats had caused a cave-in and subsequent water line break on a three-quarter inch pipe which ran to his farm operation. The leak was undetected until Winslow read the meter which indicated that 353,000 gallons of water had been used during the billing period. The usage resulted in a water bill of \$782.90. The commissioners cut the bill to \$400.

Jimmy Winslow had called and reported that his water consumption had jumped dramatically beginning early in 1989. The usage went back to earlier levels after a new meter was installed recently. The board voted to credit Winslow for his overcharges during the months the meter's accuracy is in question.

Mrs. Jake White received a credit equal to one-half of her bill of \$133.90. Although Mrs. White was not at home most of the month the bill was charged, the water usage climbed from 2,000 gallons to 60,000 gallons. A plumbing problem found in Mrs. White's home accounted for the increased consumption.

Water supervisor Russ Chappell told the commissioners that his staff is ready to begin renovations at the Bethel water plant. Only one well will be shut down at the time to prevent water shortages during the renovation period.

County manager Paul Gregory stated that complaints about water

quality have been minimal over the past few months.

Commissioner Lester Simpson said he had been approached about marking fire hydrants along the county's roads to make them more visible at night. Commissioner Wayne Winslow, also fire chief in Winfall, suggested imbedding blue reflectors on the roadsides in fire of fire hydrants.

County extension chairman Stan Winslow invited the commissioners to the Farm-City Week observance on Friday, Nov. 17. He also reviewed with the board several extension programs including livestock waste management, the Festival of Skills, the upcoming soybean festival and the state's 4-H capital campaign.

Winslow reported that some farmers are using livestock and poultry wastes as fertilizer. Commissioner Thomas Nixon said that he had heard complaints about the odor resulting from the practice of spraying the waste on farmland. Winslow replied that odor and runoff into creeks and swamps are problems associated with the fertilization. He suggested that a drilling method might help.

Gregory told the commissioners that \$13,269 has been made available by the state to help fund the transit system. Under the program, transportation is provided to medical facilities, the nutrition site, vocational rehabilitation, social security and social services.

The board voted to use AT&T long distance services at pay telephones throughout the county.



Giving a pint of life

The Perquimans High Beta Club sponsored a very successful American Red Cross bloodmobile last Thursday in the high school gymnasium. Over 90 students and teachers attempted to donate blood. The drive surpassed its goal of 50 pints by 20 units, collecting 70 pints of blood. For more details, see the PCHS Dateline column on page 9.

Tax amnesty legislation working in state

Legislation passed by the 1989 General Assembly aimed at collecting thousands of dollars in delinquent taxes has already begun paying off. North Carolinians are paying.

Prompted by findings of the Select Legislative Committee on Tax Fairness, legislators voted for a period of amnesty for individuals and corporations from Sept. 1 to Dec. 1. Taxes that were either unpaid or unreported in years past can be cleared up in this three-month period, with no criminal penalties or consequences.

The 1989 report from the Committee on Tax Fairness indicated that \$25 million in back taxes could be collected through the amnesty program. To date, approximately \$3 million in delinquent taxes have been reported to revenue officials.

The Amnesty Program is not limited to income taxes. Other taxes included in this program are sales and use, inheritance, gift, intangible, license, franchise, motor fuels and inspection taxes.

The amnesty period provides a chance for individuals and businesses to settle the score with the state in back taxes without penalty. However, after the amnesty period ends, the penalties for tax evasion will increase significantly, ranging from a \$1,000 fine and six months imprisonment to a \$25,000 fine and five years imprisonment for willful evaders.

One reason for stiffer penalties is that more than \$300 million in state and local taxes go uncollected each year, according to some estimates. The burden this places on the state budget, and consequently on honest

taxpayers, is both unfair and overwhelming.

At present, 31 states have instituted amnesty programs, with good results.

Not only does the Amnesty Program promise North Carolina up to \$25 million this year. The stiffer penalties will encourage former non-taxpayers to pay, generating an estimated \$69 million in recurring revenue in subsequent years.

Early results indicate that the Amnesty Program is an effective approach to the problem of regaining lost tax revenues. The General Assembly believes that giving people a chance to make a fresh start will lead to more accurate and thorough tax reporting and payment in the years ahead.



Coloring contest winners

The winners of THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY's "Color Me Spooky" Halloween coloring contest were (left to right) Renee Jordan, 8 to 10-year-olds; Erin Dale, 5 to 7-year-olds; and Crystal Kirby, 11 to 13-year-olds. The winners received prizes from Woodard's Pharmacy, Apricot, Inc. and Peoples Bank and Trust Company, respectively. Receiving honorable mention were Elonda Copeland, 5 to 7-year-olds; Ashley Hurdle, 8 to 10-year-olds; and Kristie Roberson, 11 to 13-year-olds.



HOLIDAY DEADLINE SCHEDULE SEE PAGE 4 FOR DATES/TIMES